



CASES OF INJURY OF THE BRAIN, INVOLVING SPEECH.

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IN October, 1842, I was called to see James Lawson, aged 18 a resident of New Haven, Ohio.

I found him comatose. There was a fracture of the skull, occupying the anterior superior angle of the left parietal bone, caused by the kick of a horse. He was insensible during the operation of trephining and removing fragments of bone, which left an opening as large as a half dollar. Soon after the operation he fully recovered his senses.

On the morning of the third day I found the patient comatose. I cut the stitches and opened the wound, when there escaped a clot of blood and a small quantity of bloody serum. As soon as this cause of pressure was removed he became not only conscious, but was able to converse freely. I exposed the brain in order to ascertain the source of the hæmorrhage. As the dura mater was not injured, it occurred to me that the case afforded a good opportunity for experiment.

When the patient was asked a question that involved a considerable degree of mental effort there was an increased motion of the brain, accompanied by a decided increase of the flow of blood in the small vessels of the brain, which con-

gestion gradually subsided as soon as the mind came to rest. I next asked him a question, and immediately made firm pressure, with my thumb, on the exposed brain. As long as the pressure was continued he remained silent, but the instant I lifted my finger, he would reply, never suspecting that he had not answered at once. These experiments were repeated again and again with precisely the same results.

For fear that I might be censured for exposing the person's life in my young zeal for science, I will say that he recovered without another bad symptom, and is still living, a healthy man.

Dr. Thos. Johnson and Dr. Orlando Steward, of New Haven, Ohio, were present at the operation.

Dr. Johnson remarked that he had always supposed the mind was the immortal part of man—the soul, but these experiments showed the brain to be a machine for the manufacture of thoughts, for in this case you are able to control the boy's thoughts, stop and start the brain, as an engineer his locomotive.

August, 1856, John Loftus, an English boy, aged 19, was working in Mount Pleasant, Racine County, Wisconsin. He was ordered to ride the mare, Dolly, to town, and leave her colt in the stable. While struggling with the colt the mare kicked him on the head.

Those who witnessed the accident supposed him to be killed, but finding that he soon began to breathe, sent for a surgeon.

I found a fracture and depression at the superior border of the os frontis, a little to the left of the mesial line. Dr. S. W. Wilson assisted in the operation. As soon as the depressed portion of the bone was removed, the patient sang out, "Whoa, Dolly," with great energy, and then stared about him in amazement, and demanded, "where is the mare, where am

I, what has happened?" Three hours had elapsed since the accident, and yet the word that he was just about to utter remained locked up by the pressure, to be articulated the moment that pressure was removed. Loftus had a good recovery. He was not conscious that Dolly had kicked, but recollected that she wheeled around with her heels towards him, and laid back her ears. It may be interesting to state that the locality of the fracture in these two cases was nearly at the same point.

The following remarkable case was related by Prof. R. D. Mussey, of the Ohio Medical College at Cincinnati, to the class of 1840, in a lecture on the physiology of the brain. I do not know whether it has ever been published.

A man living in Vermont was standing near his mill, bantering with his son about shooting a kingfisher that was perched on a dry snag that projected from the water in the pond. The son fired and the rifle ball, a small one, missed the bird, ricocheted and struck the father near the middle of the forehead. He dropped instantly, and for a long time it was thought impossible for him to recover; but time wore on, and he still lived, a mere animal, incapable of speech, for 15 years, at which time there appeared a slight elevation of the skull at the crown of the head.

Dr. Mussey was called and trephined the spot, when he was enabled to remove the flattened ball that had remained so long within the skull. In a few moments the old man called out, "Zeke, you dog, you missed it!" "Missed what?" asked the doctor. "Why, the kingfisher!" This was the first word spoken since the accident, and he could not understand that the report of the rifle was not still reverberating over the water at that moment. Zeke was married, had a family, and was living in the West. The father had grown gray, and all was changed. A Rip Van Winkle in reality.

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